Memorandum of Understanding

BETWEEN IOWA HEAD START ASSOCIATION AND

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Head Start State Collaboration Office

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to provide a common understanding of the collaborative relationship between local Head Start programs in Iowa (represented by the Iowa Head Start Association) and the Iowa Department of Education (through its Head Start State Collaboration Office—HSSCO). A common understanding is essential to establish clear expectations, a consistent way of relating to one another and a platform for cooperative endeavors as these organizations move into the future. The scope of this memorandum is designed to create the foundation on which the work of the Iowa HSSCO can plan and implement its work within the boundaries overseen by the Department of Education and the HSSCO grant requirements.

<u>The Iowa Head Start Association</u> (IHSA) is an association of Head Start/Early Head Start programs operating in Iowa, who are gathered for the purposes of advocacy, education and leadership with a mission to enhance the capacity of its members, and to promote and advocate for a wide range of quality services for all of Iowa's children and families. The association convenes as the Iowa Head Start Association Council. Each Head Start program is represented by a director, a staff member a parent and a friend. IHSA accomplishes this mission by providing, promoting and supporting a variety of activities for Head Start programs throughout the state.

Head Start/Early Head Start is a national program that provides comprehensive developmental services for America's low-income pregnant women, and children birth to 5, as well as offering social services for their families. Early Head Start directs its services toward pregnant women and children ages birth through three years of age, and Head Start serves preschool children ages 3 to 5.

<u>Iowa Department of Education, Head Start State Collaboration Office</u> established in 1993 through federal grant monies provided by the Head Start Bureau to create the capacity to support the development of multi-agency and public/private partnerships at the State level. The Collaboration office is housed in the Bureau of Children, Family and Community Services of the Iowa Department of Education.

The Collaboration Office ensures the coordination of Head Start services with health care, welfare, child care, education and community service activities, family literacy services,

services to homeless families, and activities relating to children with disabilities. One of the objectives of the Iowa Head Start Collaboration Office for FY2003-2007 is "Collaborations between agencies which have as their vision improving the well-being of the lives of young children and their families at the State and local level are promoted by the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office." Included in the objective is the "desired result" to "support the work of the Iowa Head Start Association." This signals the clear expectation and intention of the HSSCO to engage in a productive working relationship with the Iowa Head Start Association.

II. DEVELOPING A PRODUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP

The statewide nature of the work of both the Iowa Head Start Association and Iowa Head Start State Collaboration office speaks to the need to establish and maintain a productive working relationship to better meet the needs of low-income pregnant women, children and their families. It is the desire of the Iowa Head Start Association and the Head Start State Collaboration Office to engage in such a relationship through collaboration. Collaboration implies a full commitment to a common mission, requiring comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels. The foundation of this collaborative emphasis is a productive working relationship built on enhancing trust, confirming our common vision and mission, and specifying desired results.

Enhancing trust

The central elements of a trusting relationship include 1) consistent sharing of relevant information, 2) avoiding unnecessary controlling actions, 3) allowing for mutual influence, 4) clarifying mutual expectations in advance and over time, and 5) meeting those expectations. We understand that these principles are important to building the necessary trust for a productive working relationship and commit ourselves to living them out.

Common vision and mission

The basis for any collaborative work is the alignment of purpose among the collaborating partners. Consistent alignment exists between the purposes of the Iowa Head Start Association and the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office. Both share a common emphasis on supporting the well-being of children and families, and both believe in power of partnerships as a way to get things done.

The Iowa Head Start Association and the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office share a common statewide vision that all children, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful. The mission of the IHSA is to enhance the capacity of its members to promote and advocate for a wide range of quality services for all Iowa's children and families.

Meanwhile, the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration operates under a federal grant with a specific charge. The Head Start community recognizes that states play an important role in the formulation and implementation of policies and initiatives that affect low-income children and their families. The Head Start Bureau funds the Iowa Head Start-State Collaboration office whose purpose is to create the capacity to support the development of multi-agency and public/private partnerships at the state level. These partnerships are intended to: 1) help build early childhood systems and enhance access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children; 2) encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives, augmenting

Head Start's capacity to be a partner in State initiatives on behalf of children and their families; and 3) facilitate the involvement of Head Start in State policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start target population and other low-income families.

The alignment between the Iowa Head Start Association and the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office is clear both in terms of the object of its work (children and families) and its means of working (developing partnerships).

A review and acknowledgement of the shared purposes of our work should occur on a regular basis to ensure collaborative activities remain consistent with the common vision and mission of these respective entities.

Specifying desired results

For a common mission and vision to have any relevance or purpose, it must be grounded in concrete action. This means both parties should exhibit a sincere commitment to coordinate their work around goals and strategies designed to achieve specific desired results. These goals and strategies must be consistent with the HSSCO grant requirements, including its priority areas and goals, and subject to any direction by the Region VII office of the Administration of Children and Families. They must also be compatible with IHSA bylaws and designed to support the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

The nature of this working relationship needs to be rejuvenating. Specifically, this means that both parties should assume a commitment on an ongoing basis to explore new ways to further collaboration and individual Head Start agency support. Therefore, on an annual basis, the IHSA and HSSCO should develop and approve a set of goals and strategies that guide their common work.

III. PROCEDURAL EXPECTATIONS

As noted above, the basis for a productive relationship and an essential aspect to developing trust are clear mutual expectations. This memorandum includes some initial expectations around how communications and mutual accountability are ensured.

- 1. To facilitate the development of a productive working relationship, *representation* from the Iowa HSSCO will be expected at both the IHSA board and council meetings, and the Region 7 Head Start Association. Representation from the IHSA board will also be expected on the Iowa HSSCO Advisory Council or whatever entity is serving this purpose.
- 2. When a position in Iowa HSSCO needs to be filled, a designated representative from the IHSA board will *participate in the hiring process*, as required by the Head Start Act, c.f, Sec. 640. [42 U.S.C. 9835] (a)(5)(C)(ii)) and to the extent State of Iowa and Iowa Department of Education hiring procedures allow.
- 3. To ensure productive communication between the Iowa HSSCO and IHSA, written and/or oral reports to the IHSA Board and Council will be expected by the Iowa HSSCO representation about activities and events relevant IHSA or the individual Head Start agencies in Iowa. Additional sharing of information, and the exchange of ideas or plans are also encouraged.

- 4. *Communication* between Iowa HSSCO and IHSA should involve IHSA staff or paid consultants and/or any other IHSA board-designated representation.
- 5. The HSSCO office will encourage, facilitate and engage *the representation of Head Start on state organizations* and state government boards, councils and working groups. The preferred form of representation would be individuals designated by the IHSA and thus accountable to them. When this is not the case or not possible, every effort should be made to communicate the content of relevant information from these entities to the IHSA board.
- 6. On an annual basis, a set of *goals and objectives* of the IHSA/HSSCO working relationship and any other activities that support this Memorandum of Understanding should be agreed on by the respective entities.

IV. ANTICIPATED AREAS OF COOPERATIVE WORK

The purpose of a working relationship is to create desired results in Iowa that improve the well-being of young children and families. Those desired results may involve work that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Training and technical assistance to Head Start grantees with and for other early childhood organizations and programs in Iowa.
- Activities and project of the Iowa Head Start Association
- Participation in the development of a strong Early Care, Health and Education system in Iowa
- Sharing of information and resources between state government and Head Start grantees.
- Sharing of information and resources between Head Start grantees and/or IHSA and other state or local organizations within Iowa.
- Facilitating, encouraging and enabling the involvement of Head Start grantees and IHSA in statewide policy development and planning and policy boards that inform state initiatives and families services on behalf of young children.
- Facilitating, encouraging and enabling the development of collaborative activities between Head Start and state and local entities, such as:
 - the Child Care Unit of the Iowa Department of Human Services (including Child Care Resource and Referral, quality initiatives, wrap-around child care grants and child care subsidy programs)
 - other programs of the Iowa Department of Education (including homeless services, supports for families of low income and child welfare)
 - public schools (including issues related to transition from preschool to kindergarten and school establishment and management of early childhood programs)
 - Iowa Community Empowerment
 - Iowa Department of Public Health (including Healthy Child Care Iowa, the Oral Health Bureau and WIC programs)
 - Iowa Department of Education (including the Shared Visions program, Parent Share and Support, early childhood special education and other early childhood programs)

 Promotion of Head Start in Iowa, including advocacy for state policies and initiatives that support Head Start's ability to meet and exceed the expectations of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other federal initiatives.

V. COST

At this time, there will be no transfer of funds to support this Interagency Agreement. If funds are transferred, the transaction will be handled through a separate contract process.

VI. <u>EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION</u>

signed below, or their designees.

Iowa Head Start Association

This Agreement shall be effective upon the signatures of the authorized officials of the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Head Start Association. It shall continue in force and effect until either party provides written notification of termination or until 5 years from the date of its signing, whichever occurs first. Notice shall be given to each party at least 30 days in advance of the termination date.

Supplements or modifications to this agreement may be entered into jointly by the parties

VII. MODIFICATION

Ted Stilwill, Director Iowa Department of Education	Date:
Georgia Sheriff, President	Date: